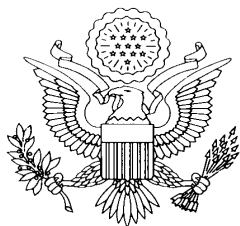


AFRICA NEWS REPORT



AFRICA REGIONAL SERVICES - AMERICAN EMBASSY

14, boulevard Haussmann 75009 PARIS - TEL: 01.43.12.48.61 - FAX: 01.43.12.46.57
(<http://usembassy.state.gov/paris-ars/wwwhpres.html>)

ENGLISH VERSION

ISSUE #913

April 18, 2006

CONTENTS

Page

State's Zoellick Calls on All Parties To End Violence in Chad (Deputy secretary of state says Sudanese refugees in Chad must be protected) (790)	1
Improvement in Sudan Possible, State's Zoellick Says (Deputy secretary cites "very important moment" for Sudan, region) (1090)	1
African Union Called Good Partner to United States on Sudan (Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick says AU playing a "fundamental role" there) (540)	2
United States Still Urging Immediate End to Suffering in Darfur (Also calls for cooperation on transition to U.N. peacekeeping force there) (600)	3
Bush Praises Ghanaian President for Honesty, Economic Reforms (Says U.S. working with Ghana to promote Millennium Challenge Account) (840)	4
Secretary Rice Holds Talks with Equatorial Guinean President (President Obiang praises his country's relationship with United States) (640)	4
Nigeria Receives Aid To Manage At-Risk Water Ecosystems (World Bank project set to preserve fadama (wetland) areas) (450)	5
Charles Taylor's Arrest "Great Moment" for International Justice (Former prosecutor for U.N. Special Court for Sierra Leone speaks out) (970)	6
U.S., Starbucks, Rwanda Coffee Partnership Equals Success (Forty thousand coffee farmers benefit from USAID project) (570)	7
African Coffee House Will Bring Kenya Flavor to Washington (Kenyan entrepreneurs' café is centrally located in major sports center) (630)	7

Muslim Outreach Key for Promoting Understanding, Integration (American government, society encourage dialogue among citizens) (770)	8
State Department Official Says Internet Aids Spread of Democracy (Ambassador Gross also warns of use of technology to suppress dissent) (400)	9
American Private Giving Outpaces U.S. Government Aid, Report Says (Index on Global Philanthropy initiates annual survey of private international giving) (550)	9
U.S. Companies Step Up the Business of Giving Overseas (Corporate philanthropy is a growing part of foreign aid) (880)	10
White House Issues Fact Sheet on Immigration Reform (Policy is to secure border, enforce laws, provide guest worker program) (1500)	11

AEF401 04/13/2006

State's Zoellick Calls on All Parties To End Violence in Chad

(Deputy secretary of state says Sudanese refugees in Chad must be protected) (790)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick called for an immediate end to violence in Chad and for that country to adopt a "different political process" if it is to avoid further rebel unrest and attacks like the one launched April 13 against that country's capital, N'djamena.

In comments the same day to the Brookings Institution in Washington -- an independent policy research organization -- Zoellick said, "There is a dimension of this that relates to Sudan ... [and] there is a dimension of this that is very much related to the internal workings of Chad." He said the regime of President Idriss Deby "has its own fragility."

Zoellick said elections in Chad were scheduled for early May, but added it has been reported that at least some of the rebel actions are being driven in part because the rebels do not view the upcoming election as being a free and fair process.

"Despite our efforts and that of the French and that of the African Union, there has not been a satisfactory coming together of the Deby regime and some of the opposition for either a fair election or some inclusive political process," Zoellick told his audience.

Zoellick, who was at Brookings to deliver a major speech on Sudan, said that in view of Chad's "turbulent history," the regime is going to have to implement a series of reforms.

He cautioned against underestimating the potential dangers of the situation, especially the possible overflow of the conflict. "We certainly don't want to do anything that creates further fuel for a fire of rebel actions or of desertion leading to rebel action," he said.

With regard to Sudan, Zoellick said it is essential to ensure that the people in the refugee camps are safe and that their basic needs are met. More than 200,000 refugees have fled into Chad to escape the violence in Sudan and now reside in those camps.

Zoellick said there are about 1,200 French forces in Chad. Their primary mission is the protection of those camps.

"So we are in touch with them and UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] in meeting the basic needs of the camps." Zoellick said the information he had on the camps is that the "situation is stable."

The deputy secretary called on all parties to stop the conflict. He also cited an urgent U.N. Security Council briefing held at the request of the United States and other nations. There is interest in trying to eliminate any possible outside intervention, and to call on the rebel groups to stop their violence and to stop the government's actions as well, Zoellick said.

STATE DEPARTMENT TERMS SITUATION IN CHAD "FLUID"

At the U.S. Department of State's midday briefing for reporters on April 13, spokesman Sean McCormack called the situation in Chad "fluid."

He added that the United States is "very much interested in seeing the political crisis in Chad resolved, and it is up to the people of Chad to resolve any political differences they may have within the confines of their law through dialogue and peaceful means, not through use of violence."

Certainly, he added, that principle also applies to the

situation in Sudan and in Darfur. "We talked about that quite a bit, that we are doing everything that we can at the moment to address the immediate concerns of humanitarian aid as well as security issues, working with the international community. On the security front," he added, "that means working very closely with the AU [African Union] Mission and then pushing forward on a couple of different fronts, both with NATO as well as the U.N."

On the humanitarian side, he reiterated that the United States is at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance to ameliorate the situation in Darfur, and that would include doing everything that can be done to address problems that now have come up along the border with Chad and Sudan.

"Ultimately, this has to be resolved on the political level. That's the long-term solution, not only for instability in Chad but also in Sudan. So we're trying to focus our efforts on all of these fronts, and we encourage the people of Chad to come together to resolve any differences they may have about their political situation and not resort to the use of violence."

The U.S. Department of State has established a task force on the situation to coordinate all State Department activities directed toward Chad.

For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF402 04/13/2006

Improvement in Sudan Possible, State's Zoellick Says

(Deputy secretary cites "very important moment" for Sudan, region) (1090)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Despite ongoing tragedies in Sudan, the possibility for improvement exists, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick said April 13, adding that this is a "very important moment" for Sudan and the surrounding region.

Sudan's current problems, Zoellick said in a speech in Washington, have "very deep historical roots."

The "core challenge," Zoellick said, is "trying to reconcile and reorganize Khartoum's [Sudan's capital] relations with the peripheries of Sudan." Soldiers, administrators and traders settled Khartoum, he recalled. "Its lifeblood was the Nile [River]," he said, and it has been oriented, traditionally, toward the Arab world's centers of development and learning -- Cairo, Egypt, Damascus, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

In its relations with the rest of Sudan, Zoellick said, Khartoum has been "ruler, manipulator, exploiter ... a tradition that runs across not just the current Sudanese independent government, but goes back to colonial periods and even pre-colonial periods."

Southern Sudan, he said, represents the "sharpest example" of this long-standing struggle. "It's got tribal dimensions ... religious dimensions ... dimensions between Arabs and Africans, and, of course, it has a very, very sad history of long-standing and terrible violence."

Zoellick said Khartoum's relations with Darfur are analogous, as are its relations in eastern Sudan (Beja) and parts of the North as well.

"The fundamental question that we are struggling with is, 'How do we try to reconcile the metropolitan center with the peripheries in a new fashion?'" he said.

There is recognition, he said, especially in Africa, that "how Sudan comes to terms with these questions is going to affect many others beyond Sudan." Sudan, after all, is Africa's largest country, he reminded his audience, with nine neighbors.

"So, from this perspective, you can see that the Comprehensive Peace Accord [CPA] that was achieved in January 2005 represents a potentially critical historic change," he said. The CPA ended a 21-year civil war that resulted in millions of deaths. Equally important, he said, the CPA offers a "constitutional framework" for all of Sudan. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Jan/10-699244.html>).)

Although it has great potential, he said, the CPA has two critical challenges: first, it is very complex; and, second, the North-South divide cannot be separated from other splits within Sudan, including the situation in Darfur.

Zoellick called the CPA's record "mixed" -- its implementation "slow," with "some slippage." But despite obstacles, he said, "I do feel that there is progress." Regarding the CPA and also Darfur, he said, "For all the tragedy and all the difficulties ... I do believe there is the possibility to improve the situation."

To make the CPA work, he said, "substantial contributions" will be needed from the United States and the rest of the donor community. The United States is ahead on its pledges to Sudan, he noted, contributing about \$1.3 billion annually -- which is divided between Darfur and the South.

What is most frustrating, he said, is that "a huge amount of that money still has to go to meet basic needs -- food, humanitarian and medical supplies." He expressed hope that, over time, more of those funds can be devoted to land mine removal on roads, establishing health systems and creating the prospects for development.

DARFUR REMAINS "EXTRAORDINARILY FRAGILE"

Turning to the situation in Darfur, Zoellick said that humanitarian conditions there remain "extraordinarily fragile." Through 2005, he said, there was "some progress" in reducing the mortality rates. But he quickly added that with the changing nature of the conflict in late 2005, the danger levels have started to rise.

"What has always worried me is that we have a very, very thin veneer here in terms of security and humanitarian support, and it would not take much to break through and take a situation that is already terrible and make it beyond belief. That is why we have the intensive focus that we do," he said.

So far in 2006, he said, the United States has supplied 86 percent of all food that the World Food Programme has sent to Sudan.

Zoellick said "stability is vital" in Darfur so that people can not only exist, but also begin to get their lives back together. On this point, he told his audience, the "Sudanese government is not doing enough" to help.

On the security situation, he said the international community owes "a substantial statement of thanks" to the African Union Military Force in Sudan (AMIS), which has played a "key role" in Darfur by stemming the violence.

"We need to work very closely with the African Union, its diplomatic side and also its military side," he said. "They will be the core of any force going forward." They have done an important job, he said, and need additional support.

While all of this is taking place, he said, there is still some resistance from the government of Sudan -- the Government of National Unity in Khartoum. "Here, I think, there is a basic diplomatic approach," he explained. "We have to keep making

clear to them that they stand alone in resisting this. The genocide, the ongoing violence, the terrible risks for their own people have led to a group of Americans, Europeans, Africans, Arabs, Asians -- all telling them that they must move on this topic."

Enabling safe conditions in Darfur would be in the interests of the government of Sudan, he said, because "any time anything wrong happens in Darfur, whatever the cause -- whether it be rebels or bandits or Jingaweit or whoever -- ... the blame goes on Khartoum."

Zoellick said another important aspect of resolving the situation in Darfur is holding accountable those who took part in the killings and murders there.

On the Darfur peace negotiations now under way in Abuja, Nigeria, Zoellick credited the African Union with playing a very important role in that process -- but whatever is accomplished in a peace agreement, he said, "is only one more step" in a long process, which must include the critical development needs of Darfur.

After Darfur, he said, "we can't stop," but must also give attention to matters in Beja in eastern Sudan.

"The goal here," he said, "is to try to create a comprehensive peace, a new political framework that leads to democracy and some chance of development for all the people of Sudan."

For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF501 04/14/2006

African Union Called Good Partner to United States on Sudan (Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick says AU playing a "fundamental role" there) (540)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick welcomed the chairman of the African Union Commission, Mali's President Alpha Oumar Konare, to the State Department April 14 and commended the African Union (AU) for being a good partner with the United States and for playing a "very fundamental role" in Sudan.

Speaking to reporters before their meeting, Zoellick said the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) troops have been acting with "great courage" and doing a tremendous job in the troubled Darfur region. Zoellick said he has visited most of the AMIS units and thus knows their capabilities and commitment to their mission firsthand.

Additionally, the deputy secretary also praised former Tanzanian Prime Minister Salim Ahmed Salim for playing a critical role in the AU-mediated peace talks on Darfur now being held in Abuja, Nigeria.

"I appreciate the chance to meet with President Konare," Zoellick told reporters, "so we can talk about ways to strengthen the AMIS mission. We want to follow up on the African Union's Peace and Security Council decision of March about transitioning to a U.N. force," he said.

Both the AU and the United Nations have talked about ways to get help from other regional organizations to strengthen their capability to deal with the tragedy and help the people in Darfur, he added.

Zoellick said "the humanitarian and security operations can only be a holding action." For that reason, he said, "we must work for this peace agreement in Abuja. ... We've both been in touch with officials in Khartoum [Sudan], as well as the rebels on trying to do that."

The U.S. official also said he was interested in getting the Konare's perspective on the recent events in Chad, a country the African leader recently visited.

"I want to get his perspective on what we can try to do to stop any danger to the government, but also urge the government to move forward with an inclusive political process," Zoellick said.

In his comments, Konare thanked Zoellick and the American team that has been working "side by side" with the African Union on Sudan.

Konare, whose remarks were translated into English, also praised Zoellick for making several trips to Sudan and for presenting an accurate view of the work that has been done by African Union forces there.

"We think it is an African responsibility that we will take and continue to work. We need to quickly reach an agreement, a political settlement in Abuja," Konare said.

He called on those in Sudan on the government side and the rebel side to "really commit to this end. We must at all prices avoid any possible influence from the actual situation in Chad on the situation in Sudan," he added. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=April&x=20060413165055WCyeroC0.7109033&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).

The African leader also said the AU is "totally available" to continue to work for progress in this area because Darfur and Sudan are "very important. The whole continent of Africa is really involved in this."

For more information, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>) and Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF201 04/11/2006

United States Still Urging Immediate End to Suffering in Darfur

(Also calls for cooperation on transition to U.N. peacekeeping force there) (600)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States has engaged and will continue "to engage the Sudanese government at all appropriate levels and venues to help stop immediately the suffering and dying in Darfur and cooperate on the transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation" there, the office of the State Department spokesman said April 10 in a written response to a question.

U.S. officials "have all been working hard every day on the Darfur crisis and the pressing need to establish a United Nations-led peacekeeping mission in Darfur," the department said.

The officials include President Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, U.S. Representative to the United Nations John Bolton, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Kristen Silverberg, Senior

Representative for Sudan Michael Ranneberger, the Deputy Secretary's Special Representative on Sudan Roger Winter and others, according to the statement.

On April 8 and April 9, at the African Union-mediated peace talks on Darfur in Abuja, Nigeria, the State Department said, "senior United States officials -- Ambassador Ranneberger, Ambassador [John] Yates, and Chargé [Cameron] Hume -- met with Sudanese V.P. [Second Vice President Ali Osman] Taha and other Sudanese government officials to press them for their cooperation on the establishment of a United Nations-led peacekeeping mission in Darfur."

In addition to "pushing" the Sudanese government and the rebel movements for a greater sense of urgency to reach a peace accord on Darfur, "United States officials underscored the importance of the Sudanese government's cooperation in ending the violence and needless suffering and dying in Darfur, as well as supporting the speedy transition of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a larger, more robust United Nations peacekeeping operation as called for by the African Union, as noted in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1663 on March 24, 2006."

The United Nations is already in Southern Sudan with the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and its humanitarian staff tending to the humanitarian needs of the region's people following the end of the 21-year civil war between Northern and Southern Sudan, the statement noted.

U.N. SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN UNION EFFORTS

In a separate development, the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) April 11 offered its full support to the African Union for its efforts to achieve lasting peace in Darfur and reiterated "in the strongest terms" the need for all parties to put an immediate end to the violence and atrocities there, saying that persisting violence in Darfur might

further affect the rest of the country and region and undermine the security of Chad.

The UNSC took issue with several actions by the Government of National Unity, including its decision to deny the entry of U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland to Darfur, and asked for an explanation of its decision.

The UNSC reiterated its full support for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on the Conflict in Darfur in Abuja, noting that an inclusive political settlement is key to peace in Sudan, that the talks provide a mechanism to achieve such a settlement and that the African Union should maintain leadership.

It welcomed the timely involvement of the chair of the African Union and the president of Nigeria in the talks during their April 8 visit to Abuja, and affirmed that April 30 is the final deadline for reaching an agreement.

For additional information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF301 04/12/2006

Bush Praises Ghanaian President for Honesty, Economic Reforms

(Says U.S. working with Ghana to promote Millennium Challenge Account) (840)

President Bush said Ghana's president, John Kufuor, "has done a fantastic job" for his country, specifically mentioning that Kufuor has kept his promises to his people to bring honesty to the government and to create a stable economic platform.

Speaking with Kufuor at the White House April 12, Bush said that U.S. confidence in Ghana and its leadership has resulted in U.S. funding and cooperation with Ghana through the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the competitive bilateral development fund designed to promote economic growth.

"It's a statement of our respect, and it's a statement of our appreciation for somebody who is willing to invest in his people, who is willing to fight corruption, who is willing to help a market economy grow," Bush said.

Kufuor thanked Bush "for understanding Africa," and specifically for his efforts and \$15 million in funding targeted to the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa, "some of which has helped to, in a way, save and also make life easier over 400,000 afflicted people." (See AIDS in Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids/aids_in_africa.html)).

He said "everything [is] going to plan" in terms of the MCA, and that the United States and Ghana plan to sign a compact by July. "That would enable Ghana to pursue modernized agriculture," he said.

""[T]hese projects that would free hundreds of millions of dollars to help modernize our agriculture would affect as many as 3 million people, help reduce poverty, and also push growth for the economy," Kufuor said.

The Ghanaian leader also mentioned the recent visit by Laura Bush to his country. On that visit, the first lady promoted education, including supplying textbooks and materials for children and helping to educate girls. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/18-498626.html>)).

"I believe this is a President that is helping Africa help itself. And we count on your support," Kufuor told Bush.

For additional information, see Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).

Following is the transcript of Bush and Kufuor:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

April 12, 2006

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT BUSH
AND PRESIDENT KUFUOR OF GHANA
IN PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

The South Lawn

11:57 A.M. EDT

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. President, welcome. It's good to have you back. We just had a wonderful discussion about our bilateral relations, and a great discussion about the world. I really enjoy talking to a man of vision and strength and character. President Kufuor has done a fantastic job for Ghana. He's told the people of his country he'd bring honesty to government, and he has. He told the people of his country that he would work to create a stable economic platform for -- and he has done that, as well. And he's a man of peace. He cares deeply about peace in the region.

As a result of his leadership and our confidence in his government, we're very happy to work with his country to promote what we've called the Millennium Challenge Account. It's a

statement of our respect, and it's a statement for our appreciation for somebody who is willing to invest in his people, is willing to fight corruption, who is willing to help a market economy grow.

Mr. President, congratulations on your record of leadership. Thank you for being a man of peace. Thank you for coming to Washington.

PRESIDENT KUFUOR: I want to thank the President for understanding Africa. His works, for the past five years or so, have done so much in terms of contributing to the fight against HIV/AIDS on two fronts -- the fund you set up, \$15 billion fund, some of which has helped to, in a way, save and also make life easier over 400,000 afflicted people.

Then on the education front, I was honored with a visit from Mrs. Bush just about two months ago, during which she launched a program towards linking the messages of the United States and Africa, to work out curriculum for primary and basic education, and also for supplying textbooks and education materials for children, and also helping with education for girls.

And then there's AGOA, which Ghana is benefiting from, even though there we need more help. (Laughter.) And then there's the TIFA, Trade and Investment Framework law. I believe this is a President that is helping Africa help itself. And we count on your support.

On the MCA front, everything going to plan, Ghana and the United States will sign a compact by July. And that would enable Ghana pursue modernized agriculture. We are largely an agricultural country, and these projects that would free hundreds of millions of dollars to help modernize our agriculture would affect as many as 3 million people, help reduce poverty, and also push growth for the economy.

So we see the President as a friend of Ghana's, and I can say, of much of Africa. Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, Mr. President. Let's go have lunch.

END 12:01 P.M. EDT

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF302 04/12/2006

Secretary Rice Holds Talks with Equatorial Guinean President
(President Obiang praises his country's relationship with United States) (640)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice welcomed President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea to the State Department April 12 for what she called a "full set" of talks about the United States' relationship with his country.

Speaking to reporters at the State Department prior to their meeting, Rice said: "I'm very pleased to welcome the president of Equatorial Guinea, President Obiang. We will have a full set of discussions about our bilateral relationship, about some innovative social programs that USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] is involved with and about the range of regional issues that we both confront.

"So thank you very much for your presence here. You are a good friend and we welcome you," she told the president.

In his comments, President Obiang thanked Secretary Rice for her words, saying his country has "extremely good relations" with the United States and has enjoyed "good relations with the United States for a very long time."

"My visit here is simply ... to consolidate and also to establish further ties of cooperation with your country," the president said.

The Equatorial Guinean leader noted that just one day earlier, he signed a "very important agreement with USAID"-- an agreement for the development of Equatorial Guinea, which will be helped with financing from the United States for social programs so the country's people "may enjoy greater prosperity and are able to combat poverty."

Obiang said the people of Equatorial Guinea are "extremely pleased and hopeful" that their present relationship with the United States "will continue to grow in friendship and cooperation. I thank you very much."

USAID AGREEMENT WILL AID SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

USAID April 11 entered into a unique memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Equatorial Guinea to establish a social development fund in the country, implementing projects in the areas of health, education, women's affairs and the environment.

Using only its own government revenues, Equatorial Guinea is contributing \$15 million to USAID to provide technical assistance to support implementation of the fund, according to a USAID press release.

Those funds, according to USAID, "will be instrumental in fostering transparency and accountability in the design, implementation and evaluation of social needs projects."

USAID Administrator Randall Tobias, who spoke at the signing ceremony, called the MOU a "landmark agreement."

"Equatorial Guinea's decision to use government revenues for social development needs," he said, "demonstrates visionary leadership and the potential of true transformation. This kind of agreement," he told his audience, "can serve as a model for future partnerships around the world, and USAID graciously accepts these resources."

USAID's technical support of the fund will be managed through USAID's West Africa Regional Program in Accra, Ghana.

Cindy Courville, special assistant to the president and senior director for African affairs at the National Security Council, reminded everyone at the ceremony that "the focus of this dialogue is transformation. The rewards for future generations will be great."

Lloyd Pierson, USAID assistant administrator for the Bureau for Africa, acted as master of ceremonies for the event.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER TRAVELED TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer recently traveled to Equatorial Guinea. While in Malabo, she met with Equatorial Guinean Foreign Minister Micha Ondo Bile.

Frazer also had a series of meetings with other government officials and with the American Chamber of Commerce during her stay in Malabo. In addition, she launched the new consular section at the U.S. Embassy and visited a health clinic involved in anti-malarial efforts, which is supported by a U.S. oil company working in the country.

For more information on U.S. policies, see U.S. Aid to Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF303 04/12/2006

Nigeria Receives Aid To Manage At-Risk Water Ecosystems (World Bank project set to preserve fadama (wetland) areas) (450)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The World Bank has agreed to help Nigerians sustain the management of wetlands, known as "fadamas," in partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), an independent international financial organization headquartered in Washington.

In an April 11 press release, the World Bank announced its involvement in the Second National Fadama Development - Critical Ecosystems Management project. A \$10 million grant from GEF will help pay for the development collaboration.

Fadamas are low-lying areas near rivers that become flooded during the rainy season. They are valuable for grazing and agriculture and are important to international biodiversity as breeding grounds for migratory birds.

Nigeria has eight fadama areas, or zones. They include the Sokoto Basin, the Chad Basin, the Middle Niger Basin, the Benue Basin, the Southwestern Zone, the South-Central, the Southeastern and the Basement Complex.

According to the World Bank, poverty in Nigeria is "widespread and a complex challenge." The fadama project will provide a framework for addressing both poverty reduction and the sustainable management of fadama ecosystems, which are vulnerable to bad farming practices that lead to land erosion and water pollution.

To that end, the project "will help develop the capacity for sustainable natural resource management at national, state, local government and community levels and establish an integrated ecosystem management in selected watersheds, through sustainable management of key forest areas, buffer zones and wetlands and improved water management," according to the press release.

The World Bank-GEF collaboration will finance six of the 18 Nigerian states participating in the project and target 400,000 people, who will benefit locally with increased work opportunities, said Simeon Ehui, the World Bank leader of the project.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Established in 1991, GEF provides financing to developing countries for environmental projects that also promote jobs for local communities. Its focus includes climate change, biodiversity, international waters and land degradation. It also works to combat desertification and pollution.

Development specialists at the World Bank work with GEF in preparing co-financed projects and supervise their implementation. Since 1991, the bank has helped implement \$1,972 billion worth of GEF financing and \$3,037 billion in co-financing for GEF projects in 80 countries.

GEF will host environmentalists and policymakers from the public and private sectors and civil society from 176 countries at a meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, August 29-30. The meeting will chart "a forward-looking agenda and work program for the GEF, including field visits to GEF-financed projects," according to the GEF Web site.

For additional information on U.S support for Africa, see Trade and Economic Development (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF202 04/11/2006

Charles Taylor's Arrest "Great Moment" for International Justice

(Former prosecutor for U.N. Special Court for Sierra Leone speaks out) (970)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The recent arrest of former Liberian President Charles Taylor marks a "great moment for international criminal justice and the victims who suffered so tragically" under his rule, says David Crane, the former prosecutor for the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Speaking at an April 7 session at the United States Institute of Peace entitled "Charles Taylor on Trial," Crane said now that Taylor has been arrested, the rest of the story is going to follow the clearly laid out rules of criminal procedure and evidence. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/Mar/29-802897.html>).

"It's routine," he said. "We have an indictee. He is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He has been arraigned. He has pleaded not guilty. ... The decision now is what to do with him."

The original plan, Crane said, was to move Taylor to the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands -- to get him out of West Africa and "let the dust settle."

"Over time, all of these tyrants, these warlords, these thugs -- their influence tends to wane. We have seen this ... from [former German Third Reich General Hermann] Goering to [former Serbian dictator] Slobodan Milosevic and [Iraqi dictator] Saddam Hussein ...

"So that was the original thinking ...," Crane told his audience. "The thinking is to go ahead and try the case at the Hague.

"That can be done," he explained. "Article Four of the statute allows for the Special Court to prosecute anyone who bears the greatest responsibility -- pretty much anywhere in the world, wherever it makes sense."

"When you are sitting there trying these guys and you have these people led in missing various body parts and you see one of them point their stump at the accused and say, 'You did this to me' because their hand is missing -- and then walk out proudly with their head held high ..., ladies and gentlemen, ... that is justice," Crane said.

TAYLOR SUPPORTED REBELS, CONDONED BRUTALITY

Taylor was elected president of Liberia in 1997 with 75.3 percent of the popular vote. During his presidency, he continued to battle insurgents who opposed his rule and reportedly began selling arms and other supplies to rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Taylor reportedly traded weapons for diamonds. Meanwhile, the rebels he purportedly aided continued their war against Sierra Leone's government, conducting brutal sweeps through civilian areas, chopping off the arms, legs and noses of thousands of suspected government supporters, including women and children. On June 4, 2003, Taylor was indicted for war crimes by the U.N. Special Court for Sierra Leone.

After Liberia descended into civil war in the early 1990s, widespread fighting began in neighboring Sierra Leone as well, led by rebels who reportedly crossed into the country from Liberia. The fighting grew more brutal over time, with roving bands of rebels often hacking the limbs of civilians in the countryside.

A 1996 peace accord failed to stop the fighting, and war raged in Sierra Leone until troops from the United Nations, Britain and the West African nation of Guinea succeeded in disarming the combatants in January 2002.

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

Crane said that international criminal justice can be delivered efficiently and effectively in the Special Court for Sierra Leone within a politically acceptable time frame. The court is a joint effort between the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations.

The former prosecutor called the Special Court for Sierra Leone the world's first "hybrid international war crimes tribunal with a workable mandate." That, he stressed, is the key to the "apparent success" of the tribunal's mandate, to prosecute those with the "greatest responsibility" for committing war crimes.

That means "going ... after those who started this, aided it, abetted it, continued it and created the conditions by which other individuals were able to murder, rape, maim, mutilate, pillage, plunder, slave, etc.," he said.

Crane was appointed special prosecutor in April 2002 and said he expects the court to complete its work in 2007.

Currently, there are three joint criminal trials in Freetown, Sierra Leone, he said, against the leadership of the Civil Defense Force, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

With regard to Taylor, Crane said, "Our plan was to roll him up with the joint criminal indictment with the RUF, but that did not take place."

Certainly, he said, much of the same evidence gathered in the RUF trial can be used against Taylor.

Crane called Taylor the "centerpoint of a 10-year geopolitical plan" that Libya's Muammar al-Qadhafi started in the late 1980s to recruit individuals to move south, foment rebellion and eventually take over their countries and become "surrogates for Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi so he could do whatever he wanted to do with West Africa."

"We have clear evidence of this," Crane said. Those recruited by al-Qadhafi included RUF rebel leader Foday Sankoh; Blaise Compaore, the current president of Burkina Faso; and diamond merchant Ibrahim Bah, he added.

The result of this joint criminal exercise "was the murder, rape, maiming and mutilation of 500,000 people in Sierra Leone and about 600,000 in Liberia," Crane charged.

JUSTICE FOR LIBERIANS

Crane said a hybrid international war crimes tribunal should be considered for Liberia. "We cannot walk away from 600,000 human beings. The ultimate atrocity in my mind is that we don't do something and that these people go quietly into the night and that there is no record of their horrible deaths."

For information on U.S. policy in the region, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF203 04/11/2006

U.S., Starbucks, Rwanda Coffee Partnership Equals Success
(Forty thousand coffee farmers benefit from USAID project) (570)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Millions of coffee drinkers worldwide and thousands of farmers in Rwanda have been made happy, thanks to a partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that led giant U.S. coffee retailer Starbucks to market the brand "Rwandan Blue Bourbon" in 5,000 of its shops.

Executives from the Starbucks Company, whose 100,000 employees host 40 million customers a week in 10,800 outlets worldwide, joined USAID officials at the Rwandan Embassy in Washington April 11 for a celebratory tasting of the latest Starbucks "Black Apron Exclusive" specialty coffee from Rwanda.

The coffee arrangement with Starbucks -- sales began in March -- was made possible after USAID partnered with Rwandans to upgrade the coffee-farming and coffee-processing infrastructure in the land-locked Great Lakes country.

Jacqueline Schafer, USAID assistant administrator for the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, told the gathering, "We have spent \$10 million in the past five years to promote and develop the Rwandan coffee industry."

She added, "I am particularly pleased because this market-oriented partnership has improved the livelihoods of 40,000 [Rwandan] farmers by enabling them to sell a high-value crop."

As part of its five-year project, USAID helped Rwandan farmers build and renovate coffee-washing stations, trained them in "cupping and tasting" techniques, organized cooperatives, furnished financing opportunities and introduced them to U.S. coffee retailers like Starbucks.

"This is a perfect example of a successful [development] partnership, and I hope it becomes a model for other countries," Schafer said.

SUSTAINABLE COFFEE CULTIVATION CREATING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Alfredo Nuno, a green-coffee trader [purchaser] for Starbucks, told the embassy gathering that Rwandan Blue Bourbon is a "superior" product that naturally belongs with nine others in the company's Black Apron Exclusive category of premium coffees.

Referring to the ethnic strife that led to the deaths of 800,000 Rwandans 12 years ago, Nuno said: "We look at the future of Rwanda and see that it is bright. We are committed to working with Rwandan producers ... to establish a long-term relationship" and expand their production into the international market.

Rwandan Ambassador Zac Nsenga also touched on the 1994 tragedy in his country, saying: "This morning's celebration is timely. It is happening at a time when we are in our 12th genocide commemoration. Therefore, we are not only celebrating a success story of a meaningful cooperation ... but also the dividends of reconciliation and stability in Rwanda."

The aim of the growers in Rwanda, said Nsenga, is "to produce sustainable quality coffee in sustainable quantities while maintaining standards. They are looking for lasting partnerships with Starbucks. In doing this, they aim at achieving sustainable livelihood for their families."

The government of Rwanda is "determined to create a conducive business environment for this relationship to flourish" and to continue a development strategy emphasizing public-private sector partnerships, said the ambassador.

Nuno explained to the Washington File that the Rwandan product is especially flavorful because it was grown near the

equator at relatively high altitude -- 2,200 meters. Coffee can be cultivated between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the trader explained.

For Rwandan Blue Bourbon, "blue" refers to the blue-green color of the unroasted cherries and Bourbon is named after the variety of the Arabica species of coffee plant.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF204 04/11/2006

African Coffee House Will Bring Kenya Flavor to Washington
(Kenyan entrepreneurs' café is centrally located in major sports center) (630)

By Susan Ellis

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A little bit of Kenya soon will be available in the heart of downtown Washington at the Verizon Center, home of the Washington's professional basketball and hockey teams, where sports fans and concertgoers flock nightly to see their favorite teams and entertainers perform.

The new coffee house, called Shimba Hills, is located on the ground floor of the huge sports and entertainment facility. The café, named for one of Kenya's little-known national game reserves (often called "one of Kenya's secrets"), is a dream realized by Andrew Agak, a Kenyan whose business sense was gained early when he began by selling potatoes from the highlands of Kenya to lowlanders near Mombasa, and continued in the United States, where he studied banking and finance at Bowie State University in Maryland.

His partners in the venture are Lillian Karuri-Magero, a childhood friend from Kenya who acts as marketing consultant, and Shalin Carter, who, as "outreach specialist," has advised Agak on which charities to assist, among other duties.

Agak said he calls the Shimba Hills coffee brand "coffee with a conscience; coffee with a mission" because "for every pound of coffee you buy, we contribute 5 percent to certain charities." One is City Arts DC, a local not-for-profit arts project for children, and the other, a water project in Kenya.

As well as sales of coffee in bulk, the café will offer fine coffees and teas from East Africa and certain Fair Trade Latin American countries, pastries and, at night, some alcohol-flavored coffees as well as beer and wine. Agak says he specializes in beans from the Mt. Kenya area, Kenya Double A coffees and some Kenya Peaberry. The café will be the first of four planned Shimba Hills concessions inside the center.

Agak told the Washington File in an April 7 interview that he had generous advice and guidance from people at the Verizon Center -- where the management has named Shimba Hills its "official" coffee -- and also from The Washington Post newspaper's entertainment section.

His sees his formal business education as important, but adds, "business school and business are two different things. You learn through trial and error -- and location is everything," as he found in an early experience in Texas, when he and a friend tried to open a business that sold and installed car stereos.

"We opened the business," he said, "and two months after we opened, Circuit City and Wal-Mart [two large retail chains] came to town and did [the same thing] much cheaper. It taught me that next time, go check with the city planners as to what exactly is happening around you."

Agak said his coffee is not eligible for assistance from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), as "Kenya already has an advanced coffee market." Kenyan textiles, in contrast, are covered by AGOA, which aims to help disadvantaged African businesses do business in the United States. Because of AGOA, small African businesses now have greater earning potential through access to the U.S. market.

Agak came to the United States in 1994 and had been importing Kenyan, Ugandan and Tanzanian coffee beans for six years and selling them to roasters in the region before opening his coffeehouse. He also worked in accounting for several Washington and Maryland firms and gained knowledge and contacts with businesspeople there. "When I was thinking what I wanted to do [for a career], I figured I'll do something I have an interest and a passion and competitive advantage in, and that was coffee and tea," he said.

More information on Shimba Hills (<http://www.shimbahillscoffee.com/>) is available on its Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF305 04/12/2006

Muslim Outreach Key for Promoting Understanding, Integration

(American government, society encourage dialogue among citizens) (770)

By Sara Feuerstein

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- "The [American] Muslim community realizes today they are part of the fabric of society, and they have a responsibility and opportunity to bridge the gap between the two cultures," said Khalil Jassem in an April 11 webchat.

Jassem serves as chief executive officer of the nonprofit, nongovernmental organization Life for Relief and Development (LIFE), which has provided more than \$100 million in humanitarian assistance to ten countries around the world.

Jassem said the attacks of September 11, 2001, served as a "wake up call" for American Muslims. The subsequent war in Iraq and War on Terror "forced them to become more proactive, and do more outreach in the community, educate, and explain to the general public what Islam is really about," he said.

He estimated that 6 million to 8 million Muslims reside in the United States, and noted that every city with a population of more than 30,000 has a mosque or place to pray.

Negative media perception "is probably the biggest challenge facing Muslims today," Jassem said. "Only through hard work, positive engagement, a good outreach plan, and help from good citizens, this problem can be overcome."

For example, even though many non-Muslims stereotype the Muslim world as harboring negative feelings toward Americans, Jassem said, "I don't think Muslims hate the U.S. at all. Islam never preaches hate against anyone." He pointed out that no single aya (verse) in the Quran uses the word "hate."

Although some Muslims may disagree with certain U.S. policies, government policy is only "one element of the relationship" -- with factors such as culture, economy, and human interaction also serving to shape Muslim views about America and Americans, he said.

Outreach is necessary on both sides because many Muslims around the world foster misconceptions about Americans as well, Jassem added.

Jassem said he considers American society quite welcoming to both Muslims, and has found that "the average American citizen is very open-minded and fair and willing to listen and engage in positive dialogue."

U.S. law promotes discussion and can "encourage the citizens to express their views and feelings peacefully and within the law. The U.S. Constitution guarantees this right," Jassem said. He cited government outreach as a "very critical tool" in helping Muslims "face challenges and secure their future" in America.

For Muslims in America, Jassem credited the combination of American laws and values as helping to expedite the otherwise "long gradual process" of integration. He describes Muslim integration in American society as "smooth and without any major obstacles."

"American Muslims are among the most educated of American society. They contribute in every element and aspect of American life. No, they are not harassed by the police," he told one of his correspondents during the webchat.

Jassem attributed Muslims' success in America to the country's foundation on the rule of law and its celebration of the work ethic. "[T]here are no limits on success level. Your nationality and background are irrelevant. Islam strongly emphasizes self-discipline, and America provides endless opportunities."

Interfaith efforts and religious tolerance also play a role facilitating Muslim integration in the United States. "In the U.S., the society view religion and religious people as an asset," he said.

Jassem used his own experience to illustrate the point: "I feel that I am no different than anyone else. In fact, I feel that I have more at stake in this country, more than most of the other citizens. I have nine children, aged 1 year to 26 years, all of them Americans, and all Muslims, and all part of the fabric of this society. There is no contradiction in being American and Muslim. A good Muslim is a good citizen."

Life for Relief and Development, Jassem's organization, was founded in 1992 by a group of Iraqi-American professionals and is dedicated to providing health, education, social and economic services to victims of hunger, natural disasters, wars and other catastrophes. To learn more about its mission and humanitarian assistance visit the LIFE Web site (<http://www.lifeusa.org/>).

A transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Apr/12-58352.html>) of the Jassem webchat and information on upcoming webchats are available on USINFO's Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>).

For more information on Muslim integration (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Sep/07-600416.html>) in the United States, read about a September 2005 webchat with Ihsan Alkhateib, president of the Detroit chapter of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. See also the publication, Muslim Life in America (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife/>).

To suggest a topic for future webchats, please e-mail iipchat@state.gov (<mailto:iipchat@state.gov>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF308 04/12/2006

State Department Official Says Internet Aids Spread of Democracy

(Ambassador Gross also warns of use of technology to suppress dissent) (400)

By Carol Walker

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- As the greatest purveyor of news and information in history, the Internet transcends borders, unites people and empowers the spread of democracy, said Ambassador David A. Gross, U.S. coordinator for international communications and information policy in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs at the Department of State.

But, he added, some countries are attempting to use technology to suppress dissent. "The restriction today [on Internet access] is government created rather than geographically created or even economically created," Gross told a Washington audience at the American Enterprise Institute on April 11.

Gross said that governments universally claim to have a desire to want more Internet access for their people and that the United States is working bilaterally with governments around the world on creating an environment to promote the construction of infrastructure and access to information.

"Governments themselves are responsible for control of communications including the Internet within their borders," Gross said, "but with control comes responsibility." Legitimate government tools to control the Internet are the rule of law and a progressive regulatory environment, he said.

Regulating the intermediary, however, said Alan Davidson, Washington policy counsel for Internet search engine Google, removes due process.

Davidson said his company, like Microsoft, Yahoo! and Cisco, abides by censorship laws when operating in countries that require them to do so. Google blocks prohibited terms in China and the company does not allow e-mail or blogs that could be viewed as political protest. Yahoo! and Cisco provided the technology to Chinese authorities that identified and put behind bars Chinese journalist Shi Tao in 2005.

"The world is a better place when people have more access and more information," said Davidson. In that way, the Internet has been a revolutionary force, he said, but targeting Internet service providers to enforce a country's free speech restrictions raises concerns.

"The United States does a lot to foster the free flow of information," Gross said. He cited the Global Internet Freedom Task Force, an initiative to work with governments, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to maximize access to information and minimize efforts to block content, suppress political debate on the Internet or use Internet data to track and prosecute legitimate dissidents. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/Archive/2006/Feb/15-989025.html>).)

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF205 04/11/2006

American Private Giving Outpaces U.S. Government Aid, Report Says

(Index on Global Philanthropy initiates annual survey of private international giving) (550)

Washington -- The U.S. private sector donates to international causes at a level nearly four times the amount spent by the U.S. government on official development assistance (ODA), according to a report about to be

published by the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity.

Called the Index on Global Philanthropy, the report tallies \$71 billion in international donations by U.S. private charities, religious organizations, universities, corporations, foundations, and immigrants sending money home for the year of 2004 (the latest year available).

That compares to \$20 billion in government foreign aid for the same year. The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranks the United States as the biggest donor of government foreign aid among developed countries in terms of total dollars given. But, in another measurement, OECD figures each country's aid as a percentage of its gross national income, which puts the United States second-to-last -- with 0.17 percent of its GNI given as foreign aid.

According to the Hudson Institute, "the tradition of private giving is considerably less developed in Europe than in the U.S." The think tank argues that Americans give abroad as they do at home -- privately -- and that the OECD underestimates the impact of that assistance.

Close to half of all American adults do volunteer work, according to Independent Sector, a forum for charitable organizations. The index estimates volunteering for international projects totals 135,000 full-time work hours per year -- worth more than \$4 billion. Web sites like www.volunteerabroad.com (<http://www.volunteerabroad.com/>) encourage the trend.

All told, U.S. private and voluntary organizations alone gave \$9.7 billion to developing countries in 2004, more than did the government of Japan, the index says.

"People in developing countries know these groups -- American Red Cross, CARE, Catholic Relief, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, YMCA -- and their foreign counterpart organizations," said Carol C. Adelman, director of Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity.

According to the report, U.S. businesses gave \$4.9 billion in 2004. Adelman refers to "philanthrocapitalists" -- who bring "business techniques, accountability, transparency and results to remote villages in need."

American universities and colleges gave more to developing countries in foreign scholarships (\$1.7 billion) than Australia, Belgium, Ireland and Switzerland each gave in ODA in 2004, the report says.

The index reports that foundations donated \$3.4 billion in 2004. The Foundation Center, a philanthropy-research organization, reported a 77 percent increase in the number of foundations in the United States in a recent decade and a 100 percent increase in international giving by foundations from 1998 to 2002.

The index includes tabulations of donations by other private sectors in 2004, including religious organizations (\$4.5 billion) and remittances by individual immigrants to their home villages (\$47 billion).

The report's authors said this is the first of what will become an annual survey that will eventually include data on

international, private giving from Europe and other parts of the world.

A d d i t i o n a l i n f o r m a t i o n
(<http://www.global-prosperity.org/>) is available on the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity Web site.

For information on how U.S. foreign assistance is affecting lives, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partnerships/index.html>) and Global Development and Foreign Aid (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.html).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF206 04/11/2006

U.S. Companies Step Up the Business of Giving Overseas

(Corporate philanthropy is a growing part of foreign aid) (880)

By Elizabeth Kelleher

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Children drank out of polluted rivers and ate without plates, forks or cups in the Nueva Segovia region of Nicaragua, until Cargill Inc. gave them better options.

The U.S.-based food and agriculture products company, which employs more than half its workers overseas, has built water storage and filtering systems, provided lunches and utensils, and taught hand-washing at Nicaraguan schools serving 10,000 children.

In recent years, many U.S. corporations have expanded operations to a worldwide scale, and their philanthropy is following.

Forty percent of Citigroup Inc.'s income comes from outside the United States, and that share likely soon will be half. As its global presence has grown since the late 1990s, Citigroup has "significantly" increased the number of overseas charitable grants it awarded, said Alan Okada, an executive with the company's foundation. In 2005, Citigroup gave \$28 million in overseas grants, more than double the amount it gave in 2001 (\$13.2 million).

The Conference Board, a business-research organization, reports a 22 percent annual increase in international giving among large U.S. corporations in its most recent survey. The Foundation Center, a philanthropic-research group, reports a similar pace of growth in international giving by corporate foundations.

Prosperity and low inflation during the 1990s increased the fortunes -- and the generosity -- of the U.S. business community. U.S. companies donated almost \$5 billion to developing countries in 2004, the latest year for which data are available, according to a report from the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity. The amount equals one-fourth of U.S. government foreign aid.

America has a tradition of corporate philanthropy. In the early 20th century, business tycoons like Andrew Carnegie and John Rockefeller started charities that focused on domestic problems. Today, executives want their companies to be good world citizens, according to Rob Buchanan, director of international programs for the Council on Foundations.

Parker Snowe, director of international programs for the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, said business schools increasingly send students overseas to volunteer for charitable projects. He said such trips help students understand "the needs of the global marketplace."

Companies give to the world's poor in diverse ways -- cash, goods and services, construction of facilities, as well as

encouragement of employee volunteerism, sometimes by granting paid leave. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports \$566 million donated by American businesses in 2005 to help communities suffering after the South Asia tsunami. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/Archive/2005/Dec/23-230195.html>).)

Thirty-one U.S. companies each gave more than \$1 million to overseas causes in 2004. The biggest donors were pharmaceutical companies -- Merck & Company and Pfizer Inc. each gave close to \$400 million. Other sectors on the list of big givers include oil, high-technology, financial services, retail, consumer-products, publishing and package-delivery firms.

Companies are not increasing overseas philanthropy for its own sake, but to "create a culture of opportunity" in the developing world, said Stephen Jordan of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Business Civic Leadership Center.

Businesses say they give to protect the health and environment of the communities in which they operate. They also give to develop infrastructure so that there can be a free flow of goods and services, according to Jordan. He said U.S. companies should not lose sight of their future profits in making grants. "Ninety-six percent of opportunity is outside our borders," he said, referring to the world's population distribution. "Increasingly, companies ... want to grow their customer base in emerging markets."

"But it can get down to life and death," Jordan said. Companies invest in helping those with AIDS in Africa, for example, because "a precondition of [being a customer] is being alive."

Grants often reflect business interests. For instance, in March, Citigroup announced a \$4 million grant for financial education of the poor in China. Cargill, which makes crop nutrients, has given grants to Nature Conservancy for conservation and environmental projects, including planting buffers along stream-banks in the Yunnan province in China to keep chemicals from farmers' fields out of water systems.

Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, founders of the high-tech company that bears their names, see philanthropy as a natural consequence of business success.

Hewlett and Packard started a grant-making foundation called the Global Fund for Women, which they call a "kitchen start-up" (because their company was a "garage start-up"). The fund has paid for underground women's schools in Afghanistan during the rule of the Taliban; for "girl-power initiatives" in Nigeria to promote health; and for a large number of women-lawyers associations around the world.

Another way companies give is in partnership with the U.S. government. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global Development Alliance, Chevron Corporation matched the government's \$10 million to help Angola's agriculture sector recover after decades of civil war. The program gave seeds and tools to nearly 200,000 families restarting farms and improved bridges and roads to better connect areas.

A d d i t i o n a l i n f o r m a t i o n
(<http://www.uschamber.com/events/ViewEvent.htm?eventID=536>) on an upcoming conference titled "The Role of the Private Sector in International Aid and Development" is available on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF209 04/11/2006

White House Issues Fact Sheet on Immigration Reform

(Policy is to secure border, enforce laws, provide guest worker program) (1500)

President Bush cited three key elements of his administration's policy toward comprehensive immigration reform in a fact sheet released by the White House on April 8. They are secure borders, stronger law enforcement, and a temporary guest worker program that rejects amnesty while allowing foreign workers to fill jobs no American is willing to do.

Each of the three elements reinforces the others, the White House said, and all are necessary to "give America an immigration system that meets 21st-century demands."

"Through the generations, Americans have upheld that vision by welcoming new citizens from across the globe. Immigrants have helped shape our identity and sustain our economy," the White House fact sheet states.

Bush has called on Congress to increase the number of green cards that can lead to citizenship, and supports increasing the number of visas for foreign-born workers in highly skilled fields, according to the fact sheet.

Following is the text of the White House fact sheet on immigration reform:

(begin fact sheet)

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

Washington, D.C.

April 8, 2006

Comprehensive Immigration Reform:

Securing Our Border, Enforcing Our Laws, and Upholding Our Values

Presidential Action:

On March 27, 2006, President Bush Attended A Naturalization Ceremony And Discussed His Vision For Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

The President supports comprehensive immigration reform to secure our border, improve enforcement of our laws, and uphold our values. The President also discussed his proposal for a temporary worker program that rejects amnesty, allows foreign workers to fill jobs no American is willing to do, and reduces smuggling and crime at the border.

-- America's Immigrant Heritage Continues To Shape Our Society. Our Nation is bound together by liberty and a conviction that all people are created with equal dignity and value. Through the generations, Americans have upheld that vision by welcoming new citizens from across the globe. Immigrants have helped shape our identity and sustain our economy.

-- The President Strongly Believes America Is Stronger And More Dynamic When New Citizens Are Welcomed. The President has called on Congress to increase the number of green cards that can lead to citizenship. He supports increasing the number of visas available for foreign-born workers in highly skilled fields.

-- The President signed legislation creating a new Office of Citizenship at the Department of Homeland Security to promote knowledge of citizenship rights and procedures; the Office of Citizenship created a new official guide for immigrants, and the Administration is working with faith-based and community groups to offer civics and English-language courses. In July 2002, the President signed an Executive Order making foreign-born members of our military immediately eligible for citizenship. Over the past four years, more than 20,000 men and women in uniform have become citizens.

-- Every New Citizen Makes A Lifelong Pledge To Support The Values And Laws Of America. New citizens have an obligation to learn the customs and values that define our Nation - including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language.

The President Welcomes A Civil And Dignified Debate On Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

Congress is now considering immigration reform proposals. Immigration is an emotional topic, and we need to maintain our perspective as we conduct this debate.

To Keep The Promise Of America, We Must Enforce The Laws Of America

President Bush's Proposal For Comprehensive Immigration Reform Includes Three Critical Elements - Securing The Border, Strengthening Enforcement Inside The Country, And Creating A Temporary Worker Program.

These elements depend on and reinforce one another. Together, they will give America an immigration system that meets 21st-century demands.

The First Element Is Securing Our Border.

-- Since President Bush took office, funding for border security has increased by 66 percent. The Border Patrol has been expanded to more than 12,000 agents, an increase of more than 2,700 agents, or nearly 30 percent. The President's FY07 budget funds another 1,500 new agents. Agents are being provided with cutting-edge technology like infrared cameras, advanced motion sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Protective infrastructure, such as vehicle barriers and fencing in urban areas, is being installed. Manpower, technology, and infrastructure are being integrated in more unified ways than ever before.

-- The Administration's Border Security Strategy Is Getting Results. Since President Bush took office, agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering the country illegally - including more than 400,000 with criminal records. Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement are working together. More than 600,000 illegal immigrants were apprehended through the Arizona Border Control Initiative last year - an increase of more than 50 percent increase over the previous year. The men and women of our Border Patrol have made good progress - but we have much more work ahead, and we will not be satisfied until our agents have full control of our border.

-- The Administration Is Ending The Practice Of "Catch And Release." The President has set a goal to end "catch and release" over the next year. Most illegal immigrants from Mexico can be returned to Mexico within 24 hours. Non-Mexican illegal immigrants present a different challenge. For decades, government detention facilities did not have enough beds for the non-Mexican illegal immigrants caught at the border - so most were released back into society. They were each assigned a court date, but virtually no one showed up. The Administration is ending the practice of "catch and release" by increasing the number of beds in detention facilities by 12 percent this year; the President's FY07 budget proposes increasing that number by another 32 percent. The Administration is expanding the use of "expedited removal," which allows us to send non-Mexican illegal immigrants home more quickly.

-- We Are Making Progress In This Effort. Last year, it took an average of 66 days to process a non-Mexican illegal immigrant. Now, the process is taking only 21 days. This has helped us end "catch and release" for illegal immigrants from Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua caught crossing our Southwest border. Since last summer, the total number of non-Mexican illegal immigrants released into society has been cut by more than a third. There is more work ahead, and the Administration will work with

Congress to close loopholes that make it difficult to process illegal immigrants from certain countries and will continue pressing foreign governments like China to take back their citizens who enter our country illegally.

The Second Element Is Strengthening Enforcement Of Our Laws In The Interior Of Our Country.

-- Since President Bush took office, funding for immigration enforcement has increased by 42 percent. These resources have helped agents bring to justice smugglers, terrorists, gang members, and human traffickers. For example, through Operation Community Shield, Federal agents have arrested nearly 2,300 gang members who were in America illegally, including violent criminals like the members of the "MS-13" gang.

-- Better Interior Enforcement Requires Better Worksite Enforcement. Last year, President Bush signed legislation to more than double the resources dedicated to worksite enforcement. Next month, the Administration will launch new law enforcement task forces in 11 cities to dismantle document fraud rings.

The Third Element Is Creating A New Temporary Worker Program That Would Not Provide Amnesty.

-- A temporary worker program would make the system more rational, orderly, and secure by providing a legal way to match willing foreign workers with willing American employers to fill jobs that no American is willing to do. Workers would be able to register for legal status on a temporary basis. If workers decided to apply for citizenship, they would have to get in line. This program would help meet the demands of our growing economy and allow honest workers to provide for their families while respecting the law.

-- A Temporary Worker Program Is Vital To Securing The Border. Creating a separate, legal channel for those entering America to do an honest day's labor would dramatically reduce the number of people attempting to sneak back and forth across the border. That would help take pressure off the border and free up law enforcement to focus on the greatest threats to our security - terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals. The program would also improve security by creating tamper-proof identification cards that would allow authorities to keep track of every temporary worker who is in America on a legal basis and help authorities identify those who are here illegally.

-- A Temporary Worker Program Should Not Provide Amnesty. Granting amnesty unfairly allows those who break the law to jump ahead of people who play by the rules and wait in the citizenship line. Amnesty would also encourage future waves of illegal immigration, increase pressure on the border, and make it more difficult for law enforcement to focus on those who mean us harm. For the sake of justice and the sake of border security, the President firmly opposes amnesty.

(end fact sheet)

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)